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*Thomas, Thomas, Armstrong & Niesen*  
*Attorneys and Counsellors at Law*

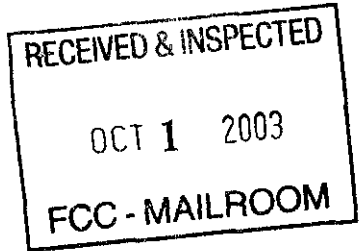
SUITE 500  
212 LOCUST STREET  
P O BOX 9500  
HARRISBURG, PA 17108-9500

MICHAEL L SWINDLER

Direct Dial (717) 255-7609  
E-Mail mswindler@ttanlaw.com

www ttanlaw.com

FIRM (717) 255-7600  
FAX (717) 236-8278



CHARLES E THOMAS  
(1913 - 1998)

September 29, 2003

**Via Federal Express**

Marlene H. Dortch  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445-12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Armstrong Telephone Company of Maryland  
CC Docket No. 96-45, Certification Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 54.314

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Enclosed is a copy of the letter issued this date by the Maryland Public Service Commission with respect to the Universal Service Funds certification referenced above. It is our understanding that the Maryland Commission has faxed a copy of this document to your attention today with overnight delivery of the original. Out of an abundance of caution, a duplicate copy is enclosed herein in order to ensure that this certification is received by you in a timely fashion.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

THOMAS, THOMAS, ARMSTRONG & NIESEN

By

Michael L. Swindler

Enclosure

cc: Barbara Dierenzo (first class mail)

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

GREGORY V. CARMEAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 29, 2003

**VIA FACSIMILE & FEDERAL EXPRESS**

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: CC Docket No. 96-45, Certification Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. §54.314**

Dear Secretary Dortch:

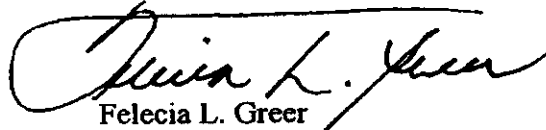
Pursuant to the requirements of 47 C.F.R. §54.314, the Public Service Commission of Maryland ("Maryland PSC") hereby certifies to the Federal Communications Commission ("Commission") that all federal high-cost support provided to Armstrong Telephone Company of Maryland ("Armstrong") for the period commencing January 1, 2004 and ending December 31, 2004, will be utilized in a manner consistent with §254(e) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. As required by §254(e), Armstrong will utilize the Federal high-cost support for the provision, maintenance and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended.

The Commission has reviewed Armstrong's request for certification and is satisfied that all federal Universal Service high cost support funds flowing to the Company, a rural local exchange carrier, will continue to be utilized solely for the purposes intended under §254(e) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. A copy of Armstrong's affidavit in support of its request is attached.

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
September 29, 2003  
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The Maryland PSC thanks the Commission for its cooperation in this very important matter. Please date stamp the extra copy of this filing and return it to the Maryland PSC in the enclosed, stamped, self-addressed envelope.

By Direction of the Commission,

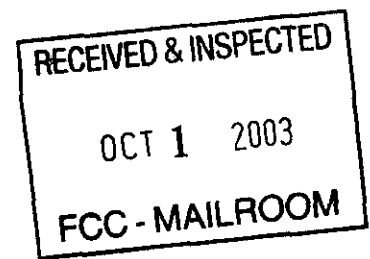


Felecia L. Greer  
Executive Secretary

FLG:nrm  
Attachment

cc: James D. Mitchell, President Armstrong Telephone Company of Maryland  
Michael L. Swindler, Esquire, Thomas, Thomas, Armstrong & Niesen

Ms. Irene Flannery  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
2120 L Street, NW, Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 2037



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA :  
:  
:  
: ss  
COUNTY OF BUTLER :

### AFFIDAVIT

Pursuant to the requirements of 47 C.F.R. §54.314, Armstrong Telephone Company of Maryland ("Armstrong" or "Company") hereby certifies that all federal Universal Service high cost support funds flowing to the Company, a rural local exchange carrier, will only be utilized in the year 2004 for the purposes intended under Section 254(e) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 ("Act").

Specifically, Armstrong certifies that it will utilize its universal service support, in the amounts shown by USAC on its website at [www.universalservice.org/hc/reports](http://www.universalservice.org/hc/reports) for the Company, for the provision, maintenance, and/or upgrading of facilities and service for which the support is intended.

In support of this certification, Armstrong represents the following:

- (1) Armstrong provided the supported services required by U.S.C. § 214(e);
- (2) Armstrong advertised the availability of supported services and the charges for them as required by U.S.C. § 214 (e); and
- (3) Funds received by Armstrong from the federal high-cost universal service support fund will be used only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of the facilities and services for which the support is intended.

Based upon the information provided in one or more of the above three categories, Armstrong certifies that it utilizes its federal universal service support for the purposes intended under Section 254(e) of the Act.

By James D. Mitchell  
James D. Mitchell  
President

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2003.

Notary Public Kelly D. Chapman

My Commission Expires:

